

OS AFRICANOS

239

Coast products much prized by Africans and their descendants in Brazil.¹ An elderly Bahian Negro recently brought out from among his treasured possessions a faded photograph of blacks aboard a ship on their way to Africa and pointed out an *atabaque*, or sacred drum, and a woman in *saia grande*.² He recalls having been many times with his father at the docks in Bahia when vessels came in from Africa and sailors brought news of Lagos.

Trade with the West Coast, however, gradually decreased until, by 1905, it had almost entirely disappeared. Today, only a few important articles employed in the fetish ritual, such as cowries, *obis* and *orobôs* (sacred fruits), *pimenta* (pepper) *da costa*, *palha* (straw) *da costa*, *sabão* (soap) *da costa*, and strips of *pano* (cloth) *da costa*, are occasionally imported from Africa.

Numerous Africans, their interest in Brazil stirred by Brazilian Negroes returning to the West Coast, are said to have emigrated to Bahia as recently as thirty years ago. Considerable areas in and about the city—for example, Caminho do São Gonçalo, Caminho do Cruz, and a portion of the Terreiro—were once owned, it is said, by *Africanos*.

Today, native-born Africans as a population element are

¹ Pedro Calmon, *História social do Brasil* (3 vols.; São Paulo, 1937-39), I, 182. It is also reported that on at least two occasions representatives of African chiefs arrived in Bahia from Ajudá, with which port Bahian officials were maintaining direct commercial relations. One arrived during the administration of the Vice-rei Conde de Athouguia; two others "and an interpreter," on May 26, 1795. See João Varella, *Da Bahia que eu vi* (Bahia, 1935), pp. 153-57; J. B. de Sá e Oliveira, "Dois embaixadores africanos mandados a Bahia pelo Rei do Dahomé," *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*, LVI, Part I (1895), 413.

² The large skirt still worn *boufante* by many Bahian black women. The date was approximately 1895.